

4°6 Unjust Judgments of the People.

Equally easy might it be to adduce historical examples to prove the brutality, the falsity, the perversity of kings, nobles, middle class. To draw from such examples the conclusion that kings, nobles, middle class, are necessarily prone to perversity and the other vices charged against them, would, however, be a rash proceeding. Even so in the case of the masses, in spite of the conventional depreciation of the centuries. Even the mob may sometimes do good work, and the people, in the sense of the aggregate of honest men and women, whatever their stations or occupations, has again and again made history which deserves to be written in letters of gold. Historians and philosophers have been terribly unjust, in this respect, to the nameless millions who have contributed their share to the progress of the world.

During Knox's exile at Geneva events in Scotland had been steadily tending towards a climax. Mary of Lorraine was evidently losing her grip on the nation. The Franco-Scottish alliance was not popular, and the Reformation movement was assuming an ever more formidable aspect. The preference for French counsellors roused the jealousy of the Scottish nobility, and from an Act of Parliament, of date June 1555, it is evident that the people largely shared in their restiveness. The Act complains that " divers seditious per-sonnis has in tyme bypast rasit amangis the comoun pepill murmuris and sclanders, speaking againis the Queenis grace, and sawing evill brute [rumour] anent the maist Christin King of Frances subjectis sent in this Realme." Another of the same date inveighs against the growing contempt of the ordinances of the Church, especially of fasting in Lent. In the following year Parliament refused to entertain the regent's proposal to establish a standing army "for the better defence of the country," and, in deference to a spirited protest of three hundred of the nobility, she was fain to abandon the policy of introducing into Scotland the military institutions of France. The Scottish king, they insisted, was called King of Scots, not King of Scotland, as if he was master of the lives and property of his subjects, and, as for the defence of the country against the English, they would answer for that with their good swords as their forefathers had done before them. She had no better success in the attempt to draw Scotland into